

THE TRUTH ABOUT COLUMBUS

FINAL CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY HENRY VIGNAUD.

In His New Book He Seeks to Show That Columbus Discovered America Because He Was Looking for It and Not for a New Approach to the Indies.

PARIS, April 1.—Henry Vignaud, who was born in New Orleans in 1830, has been for many years of his long life a devoted student of the life of Christopher Columbus. He was for some thirty-four years secretary of the American Embassy at Paris, and he is still connected with the embassy as honorary counselor. Several pamphlets and one 400 page book, "Toscanelli and Columbus," have marked the progress of his investigations into Columbus's life and discoveries, but in 1905 he published his first definite work.

In this book of 543 pages he dealt with Columbus's early history from his birth in 1451 to his settling down in Portugal in 1476. This work, which was honored with a prize by the Institute of France, showed that Columbus was neither a nobleman nor related to the celebrated Colombo family, that he received no university education, that he took no part in a campaign either for King René or with the Columbus, that he had no nautical knowledge, and that prior to settling down in Portugal he had no other profession but that of weaver. Mr. Vignaud now continues his studies in two volumes of 730 and 705 pages. The scope of the work may be judged by a few extracts from the final chapter.

Mr. Vignaud divides the information existing about the life of Columbus and the immediate causes of the discovery of America into two categories: that derived from Columbus tradition, due to Columbus, his son, and his historian Las Casas, and that derived from alien origin, unbiassed by Columbus influence. Accepting Columbus tradition only when it is supported by outside evidence, Mr. Vignaud reaches these conclusions:

That there is no trace of proof that Columbus ever spoke of going to the Indies, either to the King of Portugal or to the Catholic monarchs.

That that was not the mission with which he was charged by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, nor was it what they expected he would do.

That what he undertook to do was to discover islands or new lands as to the existence of which he had certain indications.

That these indications, which made him certain of finding what he proposed to discover and enabled him to give an assurance that land would be seen after two or three leagues, reached him from those whose evidence as to the existence of new islands to the west he had carefully collected, and in particular from a pilot who had landed on one by accident.

That at the departure of the expedition there was no question in the mind of any one of going to the Oriental Indies, and that everybody knew the sole object was new discoveries.

That the depositions of Columbus's companions as well as his own journal on board show that during the voyage the sole preoccupation was the discovery of unknown islands, and that there never was any question about the route to India.

That it was only after arriving at the Antilles, found at a far greater distance than he had expected to find land, that Columbus imagined he had reached India and the vicinity of Cathay.

That on his return he declared he had been to India, of which there had been no question before, and he set himself to find the reasons justifying this delusion which possessed him during his three other voyages and which he kept all his life.

That after his second voyage, which convinced him that Cuba was a projection from Asia, and after his third voyage, when he discovered the continent and so became confirmed in his delusions, he completed his theory on the smallness of the globe and the proximity of India which he formulated for the first time in 1498.

Mr. Vignaud then sums up all that criticism has established as to the object and origin of the great enterprise of 1492 in two propositions: First, America was not discovered by hazard in seeking to reach the East by the West; secondly, that America was found because it was sought.

Does our long and careful inquiry prove that Columbus attributed to himself a discovery that belonged to another, and must he be deposed from the pedestal on which he has been raised? Mr. Vignaud answers his question in the negative. He admits that Columbus's character, which is one mark of true greatness, was of no superior temper. He did not shrink from lowering himself to lying to make himself of importance, and he blushed for his humble origin. He was vain, greedy and vindictive, and in all he was not generous, no disinterested act can be found.

His moral sense was defective. But he had the patience, the will and the energy, which very often take the place of genius, and he could conceive and carry a great undertaking to a successful end.

The true merit of Columbus, his real distinction among all the seafaring adventurers of his time, that which places him among the privileged men who have added something to the sum of our knowledge, is to have known how to extract from all the indications given him, vague, uncertain and erroneous as they most often were, the true conclusion that there existed lands to the west of America and to have laid down this hypothetical conclusion as a fact, the truth of which was demonstrated by experience.

At a moment when most writers were agreed in seeing in the expedition of 1492 nothing but an undertaking destined to discover unknown lands were produced for the first time documents attributed to Toscanelli, which give this undertaking the same character which Columbus, in his persistent illusion, had exerted every effort to give it. That these documents, expressing the very ideas which Columbus had formed after his discovery, may be apocryphal and that they may have been fabricated, as every theory tends to show, by the contrary of his undertaking, all that is essential and what must be said, is that his authenticity, if demonstrated, would make no change in the results to which we are led by critical investigations into the true character of the enterprise which Columbus so successfully conducted.

Guided by indications to which he also shows how to give their true value, Columbus became convinced of the existence of lands as yet unknown to the west, and for these lands he sought, obstinately and patiently, intelligently, until he found them, and that assuredly is more meritorious than to have been

BIG PRIZES FOR AVIATORS

TWO LONG DISTANCE RACES IN EUROPE THIS SUMMER.

One to Take in Four Capitals and to Cover 1,000 Miles—Russia to Spend \$4,500,000 on Military Airship—France's Air Fleet—Flying for Fun.

LONDON, March 29.—Many entries are expected for the two aeroplane flights which have been planned by English and Continental newspapers to take place this year. Altogether \$170,000 will be offered in prizes.

The Daily Mail, which gave the prize of \$50,000 won by Paulhan for the London to Manchester flight, has now offered another prize of \$50,000, to be awarded to the aviator who completes a circuit of approximately 1,000 miles in an aeroplane in the shortest time within the appointed dates. The contest will begin on Saturday, July 22, and will finish at 7.30 P. M. on Saturday, August 5. It is open to competitors of any nationality holding an aviator's certificate issued by the International Aeronautical Federation and duly entered on the competition register of the Royal Aero Club of Great Britain.

The course, which is divided into four

sections, begins at Brooklands, about twenty miles south of London, and goes through London as far north as Edinburgh, from Edinburgh it goes to Bristol, in the west, and from Bristol to Brighton, in the south. The final stage is from Brighton back to Brooklands. The total distance is 1,000 miles.

Individual replacements and repairs to the aeroplane and the engine may be made, but neither may be changed as a whole.

Another great aeroplane race has been organized by the Standard of London and the Journal of Paris, with the collaboration of the Berliner Zeitung of Berlin and the Petit Bleu of Brussels. The race, which is to be called the European Aviation Circuit, will begin on June 1 and continue until the end of the month. Altogether \$120,000 is offered in prizes, and this sum may be increased before the start of the race.

The rules of the contest, which will be under the control of the International Aeronautical Federation, have not yet been definitely fixed, nor has the precise route to be taken by competitors been finally decided upon. Broadly, the contest will consist of a flight of about 1,800 miles, starting and ending at Paris and

to seventy miles an hour is claimed.

Louis Blériot's exhibits include a specimen of the military aeroplane now being purchased by the French Government.

"We have now," explained Norbert Chereau, manager for M. Blériot, "orders for no fewer than eighty war aeroplanes from the French military authorities. Thirty of these machines have already been supplied to the Government and are in use. French officers have begun to learn to fly so rapidly that there are now not far short of 100 military airmen in France."

So great is the demand now for war aeroplanes for various countries that M. Blériot cannot deliver any more two-seated military machines for reconnoitering work for the next five months.

An extensive order for Blériot biplanes, as seen at the show, has been given by the French Government. These machines, constructed almost entirely of steel, may be taken to pieces in half an hour for expeditious military transport. A number of Farman military type biplanes, in which the two occupants of the machine sit in an enclosed body like that of a racing motor car, have also been bought by the French, Italian and Spanish Governments.

With the recent orders for Blériot and Farman aeroplanes added to the number of

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One of the most important things to impress upon a person who is taking up auction bridge is the difference between free bids and forced bids. The forced bid may mean almost anything from desperation or misrepresentation to a cold bluff, but the free bid is always sound and sincere, or at least it should be, or it is wicked.

The most obvious of the forced bids comes when one is playing as a partner with a dealer who believes in the auction system and calls one spade on any hand containing a legitimate bridge declaration. The dealer's partner is forced by convention to pull him out of the one spade bid, because to leave him in would upset his whole game.

This declaration by the third hand is the cheapest forced bid in the game, because it may be made at the cost of one trick in any suit except spades, but it must be made on a certain trick, such as the ace, or both ace and king, the cheaper of two suits being always selected first, so that the other may be named if the first is doubled.

If the third hand does not hold a sure trick in anything convention compels him to call two spades, but if he has a trick in spades and in no other suit he should call three spades. Even if he has nothing but the ace of spades he should bid three tricks on it.

Such a bid can do no harm, as his partner's original call is made for the purpose of forcing the third hand to declare himself, without any intention of leaving the third hand to play it, unless it is a good red make or a no trumper. The dealer who starts with one spade may be depended on absolutely for a good red make or a no trumper in his own cards.

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If the dealer is an auction player he gets the information he has invited by his spade call, and his partner, the third hand is no longer forced to make a declaration to pull the dealer out, because the second hand by his free bid has kindly done that for him. Thus the advantage of the free bid are transferred to the hand.

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Nothing is so likely to embarrass the third hand as an original spade call by a bridge player, because it may mean anything from a Yarborough to an honor or two in three suits. If the second hand is good enough to step in and do the talking the third hand should be willing to pay him for his generosity, as it is certainly worth money. Take this hand played at the Country Club last week, all four being bridge players:

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♣ 10 9 7 5

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♠ 8 3
♥ A K Q J 7
♦ A K Q J 2
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Z bid one spade and A went one heart. This is a typical free bid on A's part. His bid of one heart would be perfectly sound if he were the dealer and were compelled to make a declaration of some kind, because any bridge player would make it hearts with those cards.

Y passes, following the rule that it is invariably bad policy to double a one trick bid while there is any chance that the adversaries can shift. B, knowing that his possible single suit no trumper is much better as an answer to a sound heart make than a long heart suit and nothing else might be to the no trumper, also passes, and the hand is played as a heart.

Y led a small spade and Z returned the diamond. Y's king won and he led a club so as to avoid establishing the queen of spades. B led the trump and Y's ace won the queen, upon which Y returned the nine to kill the eight in dummy.

When A returned the club Y trumped it, made his spade and led another spade so as to be sure of two more trump tricks, which set the contract for 50 points, the cheapest effecting simple honor.

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After this development A would have gone no trumps and if Y had gone two hearts, which he might easily be tempted to do, A would have had another free bid, with the choice of going two no trumps or doubling two hearts.

If the hand is played it will be found that with Y as the dealer he loses the odd trick in hearts and would be set for 200 points on A's double. If A went on to two no trumps he would win three by cards and the game if left to play it. Should Y be rash enough to go on to three hearts after A bid two no trumps it giving off Y and Z 300 points in penalties. Figure it any way you please. A's giving up the advantage of a free bid on the first round costs him 250 points, or a lot on the rubber and 50 points on the board.

The exercise of this privilege of

THE LAW IN SPAIN.

Troubles of a House Builder—Dilettante in Legal Proceedings.

Spanish law is founded on the old Roman law and it leaves but little to be desired, if only it were always put into effect. But the practice and theory of it are two very different things, as many know to their cost. The satire of the gypsy's curse "Que tengas pleito y no ganes" ("May you have a lawsuit and win it") is still applicable to present day methods of conducting legal matters in Spain, as the following story will show.

A friend of ours decided to build a house in Spain, writes Mrs. Shiers-Mason in the London Evening Standard, and everything went well at first. The contract was an excellent one and the contractor and builder was a most plausible and pleasant man. An old gentleman, however, with much experience of the country remarked to a friend as one day they passed the house in process of building: "That house will never be finished, for the builders always abscond in Spain."

The builder did abscond, but the house was finished by the owner. The builder had practically paid for nothing and our friend was threatened with several lawsuits. "Pay anything," said his Spanish friends, "rather than go to law, for if you don't you will be ruined." As a matter of fact the joinder, to whom the builder owed £50, had already been to law about some other matters and had been so bitten that he did not press his claim at all.

Our friend paid some, and left the rest to threaten him with proceedings, which went as far as "the act of reconciliation," in which plaintiff and defendant are brought together before the Judge, who tries to act as peacemaker, as though the law realized what a serious thing a lawsuit from itself. As has been said, our friend had to complete the house himself. To make a flat roof he engaged five bricklayers and appointed one to be foreman at an extra rate of pay with the promise of a gift if the work were well done within a certain time.

Some months after the work had been finished he was astonished to find himself sued for £28 by the foreman for tools that had been used by him to do the work. At the first trial our friend won. Some weeks later, however, he was rather surprised to be told that the bricklayer had appealed to the next court and that he had better go and "square" the Judge if he wished to obtain justice. Our friend of course did nothing of the kind, and so lost the case.

It is extremely easy to find false witnesses in Spain in these days, but less than a hundred years ago, when false witnesses in civil cases were punished with ten years' condemnation to the galleys and their property confiscated, it could have been no easy matter to find any one ready to commit perjury. A perjurer was also looked upon as non compos mentis.

In olden days if the accuser considered that he had not sufficient proof after the witness had given evidence he prayed that the accused might be tortured. A witness also if perceived varying in his answers could be tortured in the same manner as the accused. In still earlier days the accused and the accuser were tortured, and that the cause might be proceeded with in greater certainty. By which it will be seen that Spain has in some respects progressed!

If a person in Spain contests a will when the decision is at last pronounced there is rarely ever anything left for the victorious party. "No hay porras para los hacendados ricos los letrados" (fools and obstinate people make lawyers rich). This proverb is true of every country, but especially of Spain.

Lawyers' charges in Spain offer another reason for avoiding lawsuits, as they have no scale of fees. The friend above mentioned was amazed when he received his bill from his Spanish lawyer. Expecting a bill of £10 he received instead one of £60. So he went to remonstrate with him. After a dramatic interview, in which the man of law exclaimed in tragic tones "Give me what you like!" our friend got his bill reduced to a more reasonable figure.

The dilettante of Spanish law is almost incredible. One watch was stolen; the owner immediately informed the police of the robbery. Seven years afterward he was called upon to give evidence as to the robbery.

A few years ago there was an accident; three years afterward the people who were responsible for the accident were called upon to give their account of it. They had to travel about 120 miles to give evidence. The case was adjourned and they had to return home, having accomplished absolutely nothing, and they may be called upon to take the long journey again in a short time, or not for years.

The following story will illustrate the haphazard nature of Spanish justice: Some years ago a young English sailor, accompanied by an American and an Irish sailor, went on shore at Havana. While returning to their ships they were attacked by Chinamen. In the fight that ensued the American hit one of the Chinamen on the head so hard with a stick that the man subsequently died. The Spanish authorities did not trouble to discriminate, but sentenced the three men to two years' imprisonment.

The British Consul, being unaccustomed to Spanish ways, took up the case of the Englishman very strongly; the authorities thereupon passed a resolution to release the man over again and gave him all twenty years each.

The Englishman after three years in a Cuban prison, during which he contracted a case of yellow fever, was transferred to Ceuta to do the remainder of his time. After some years he and a fellow prisoner, a Spaniard, escaped into Morocco, where they were captured by the Moors, who after making them work in the fields for six months took them back to Ceuta and claimed the reward. The fact that our Englishman had done his time in the Spanish prison was forgotten by some of the biggest blackguards in the prison, who are appointed Guardians of the rest.

The food provided in the convict prison of Ceuta consists of two meals a day of garbanzos (chick peas), occasionally flavored with a tiny bit of salt pork, a remarkably good thing, not appealing to the Englishman's palate, but in prison particularly good health. After his twenty years unjust imprisonment he married a Spanish woman.

embracing en route Liège, Berlin, Utrecht, Brussels and London.

Almost throughout its length the course follows the main lines of the various railway systems. This is an advantage, as the railways will give every facility for quick repairing in the case of breakdowns and in the bringing of supplies. The railways also follow the easiest routes across country, and there are practically no natural difficulties in this circuit of the plain of Europe. The English Channel is the greatest obstacle.

The longest single stage in this flight over Europe is from Paris to Liège, for which distance two days will probably be given. This is less than the distance from Paris to Bordeaux or from Paris to Clermont-Ferrand, and both these trips have recently been made by Blériot and Renault respectively. In fact long cross-country flights now take place daily in France which pass almost unnoticed, but which are quite up to the form which will be required to cover the various stages of the European circuit.

It has already been decided, in view of the great length of the course, that competitors may use more than one machine. It is considered too severe a

machines of other makes already bought by the French Government the French War Office will shortly possess an air fleet of at least 150 war aeroplanes.

The fast flying war monoplane as designed by M. Blériot is a striking item of the exhibition. Sitting side by side, protected from the wind by a dome shaped metal screen, and with maps and compass fixed in frames before them, the driver of the machine and the observer will rush through the air at a speed of sixty miles an hour, inspecting a wide panorama of country over the sustaining wings, which have been set further back than usual to facilitate reconnoitering.

Wilbur Wright seems in the worldwide interest in military aviation the realization of his earliest hopes. Interviewed on the subject when recently he touched at Plymouth on his way to Paris, Mr. Wright said:

"We must be patient regarding the utilization of the aeroplane. We must remember that it is a new idea and takes time not only for its own development but also to win public confidence. There is a well defined use for the aeroplane in connection with armies and navies, but I do not think it will ever take the place

THE DIFFERENCE IN SPEED.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The professor of shorthand in a local business college addressed this unanswerable argument in an address to a new class the other day:

"We are told that it took Gray, author of the well known 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard,' seven years to write that famous poem. If he had known stenography he could have done it in seven minutes. We have graduates who have done that same poem in that length of time."

A grandfather at 85.

From the Wallingford Chronicle.

V. H. Bryson of Spencer, it is believed, holds the record as the youngest grandfather in the State, his age being only 35 years. He was born in 1875. His eldest son, his wife being only 15. His eldest son was married at the age of 17 and at the age of 18 presented to the elder Bryson a grand-

of the train for either freight or passenger service. There is no question in my mind that the aeroplane can develop a speed of at least 120 miles an hour—it is all a matter of power—but I would not care to drive one at that rate.

At the aviation ground at Brooklands, a few miles south of London, passenger flights in aeroplanes have become so popular that it has been found convenient to establish an office where they can be booked. On fine days the demand for aerial voyages has been such that many of the applicants could not be accommodated with seats.

A visitor consulting the officials at the booking office is shown a table of charges for aeroplane flights. It reads:

Short flight only..... £10
Three round course..... £15
Three times round course, including
volplane..... 20
Longer and higher flight..... 25
Cross-country flight, from..... 30

"We find that people try a short flight first, just once round the aerodrome," says the official in charge of the booking department. "Then in a great many cases they hurry back to the office and book a longer flight at once."

SONGS AND HISTORY.

The Origin of "We Won't Go Home Till Morning."

From the London Daily News.

It will be news to most people that the air of the classic ditty "We won't go home till morning," which is of course a variation

of "For he's a jolly good fellow," was originally the music of a pathetic French folk song.

That this is the fact we have on the authority of Sir Ernest Clarke, chairman of the Folk Song Society. In the original the air was supposed to have been sung by a French peasant woman in the form of a hymn for her husband's safety on his departure for the wars. She continued to sing the hymn until her husband was brought back to her death.

Before the Terror, said Sir Ernest, Marie Antoinette used to sing to the Dauphin a popular song, "Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre," which had got mixed up in some obscure way with our great Gen. Marlborough, and was freely translated into English as

Malbrouk, the prince of commanders, Has gone to the war in Flanders. His fame is like Alexander's. But when will he come home?

And the adapter supplied an answer not in the original.

He won't come home till morning. 'Till daylight does appear.

And about 1830 the delicate and rather melancholy French air of Malbrouk was turned into the convivial song "We won't go home till morning," the second verse of which began "For he's a jolly good fellow."

Sir Ernest Clarke's remarks went to show that many of the patriotic airs that people of all nations hold so dear were developed

from the music or words of men of other countries. Thus the "Marseillaise" was composed by a German at Strasbourg in 1792. The music of "The Star Spangled Banner" was originally Stafford Smith's glea to "Anacreon in Heaven," so that America's principal patriotic air was set to words by an English composer.

Our own national anthem was evolved from a musical manuscript discovered in 1622 by a Dr. John Bull.

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When A returned the club Y trumped it, made his spade and led another spade so as to be sure of two more trump tricks, which set the contract for 50 points, the cheapest effecting simple honor.

What has A accomplished? Had he passed the first round Y would have been forced to declare one heart and B would have called two clubs. This is not a free bid on B's part, because it is his last chance to show his strength in clubs cheaply. In case the dealer should go to no trumps A would know what to lead. If Y goes back to hearts A knows what will be led.

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